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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the attitudes of 15 urban high school students, enrolled in several different levels of Spanish second language instruction, concerning language study and instruction. Results suggest that students see language instruction as primarily grammar-oriented, but would prefer more oral practice and application. They see themselves as traveling eventually in Spanish-speaking countries. In addition, they appear to bring curiosity about other cultures to the language classroom but are not satisfied with the cultural content they receive. Implications of these findings for use of a model of multicultural exploration are examined, and further research on student perceptions of language teaching is recommended so that unmet student needs and effective practices can be accommodated. Contains 21 references. (MSE)

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ED 376 732

PERCEPTIONS OF SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS REGARDING THEIR STUDY OF SPANISH

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

Memphis State University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of

the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Teaching

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Sharon Cabral Reiter

May 1994

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To Ron
who held wide many doors.

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"Follow your bliss and don't be afraid and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be."

Joseph Campbell

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ABSTRACT

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Fifteen students from a southeastern, urban high school enrolled in Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3-4 Spanish classes were qualitatively interviewed using 16 open-ended questions. The purpose of the research was to ascertain students' interests in and their perceptions of the teaching of Spanish. Using this format, it was hoped that a deeper understanding of foreign language anxiety would surface. Five themes developed from the interviews: boring, frustrating, important, culture, projects. From those themes emerged domains regarding students' difficulties with learning Spanish, the relevance of Spanish, and suggestions for teaching Spanish. Students perceived Spanish instruction as grammar oriented; although they acknowledged the need for this, they wanted communicative competence and more emphasis on culture. Not only do these findings complement Kleinsasser's (1989, 1991) "certain/nonroutine cultures" for teaching foreign language, they also give powerful endorsement of Crawford-Lange and Lange's (1984) integrative language/culture model.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Observations by foreign language teachers and researchers show that performance anxiety among second-language (L2) students is a common phenomenon and is even expected by teachers (Asher, 1983; Curran, 1972; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope 1986; Lafayette & Strasheim, 1984; Lucas, 1984; Oller, 1979; Young, 1991.) Anxiety in the foreign language classroom has plagued language instructors for years. Horwitz et al. (1986) maintain this anxiety should be studied as a special process peculiar to second language acquisition. However, many of these studies have been done using researchers' perspectives and theoretical models. It has been suggested that survey instruments usually reflect only researchers' perceptions of students and guide or direct respondents' thinking (Kleinsasser, 1992; Oller, 1979). Savignon (1983) cautions that we think we know students interests or we think we know "what is 'in the best interests' of learners" (p. 125), but the ultimate success in learning a second language always will remain with the attitude of students.

> One problem in documenting the role of attitude in L2 learning is the difficulty in measuring the attitudes themselves. The development of attitude questionnaires, or scales, is by no means a simple task. Even those accepted as valid by experienced researchers are open to criticism. Are the learners expressing their <u>honest</u> feelings or merely ones they

> think are acceptable? Can one be sure the learner has interpreted the question as it was intended? (Savingon, 1983, p. 112)

It is the intent of this study to give students an opportunity to express their feelings about their second language (L2) study of Spanish by giving them an opportunity to respond to questions, using an open-ended protocol format. It is hoped that their replies will give insight into the formal teaching of Spanish.

Literature Review

Negative Attitudes

There is a concensus that students generally have negative attitudes about taking a second language. MacIntye and Gardner (1991) contend that students consider the experience to be uncomfortable and are not eager to participate in class activities. Horwitz et al. (1986) believe that L2 anxiety could be a contributing factor to student resentment about foreign language requirements. Asher (1983) suggests that around 5% of students who start a foreign language remain with it. Starr (1979), in a paper for the President's Commission on Foreign Language and Area Studies, states that less than 18% of all 7 through 12-grade public school students in the United States studied a foreign language, and of those only 2% chose to take a third year. Starr says, "For the vast majority who quit after a

year or two, the most enduring legacy of the experience is bitterness and frustration" (cited in Savignon, 1983, p. 39).

Anxiety

Several authors describe various reasons for the anxiety of L2 students. Lafayette and Strasheim (1984) suggest that there are built-in stress factors in the foreign language classroom. Students expect to have difficulty because of the reputation that only the better students take a second language. Once in the classroom students feel threatened because they can't understand the teacher, are expected immediately to speak flawlessly and find themselves having difficulty with what is basically an elementary curriculum in the second language. Curran (1972) contends that the atmosphere of a typical foreign language class makes a student feel anxious and humiliated. When the teacher takes on the role of the "knower" the student feels like the "ignoramus" (p. 109). It is obvious that a divisive atmosphere for learning is established and maintained.

Lucas (1984) uses Gary Davis' expression "communication apprehension" (p. 593) in reference to foreign language anxiety. She says that the classroom is "an ideal breeding ground for communication apprehension" (p. 594). Lucas cites Philip Zimbardo's The Shy Child, in which he states that many people are afraid of being perceived negatively by

others in social settings. So it follows that in the classroom, the teacher represents the authority who is in a position to reject students' performances, and students are in the position of ridiculing peers.

Horwitz et al. (1986) believe that foreign language anxiety centers on the basic requirements of listening and speaking, but the greatest problem is with speaking. Some of the effects of this anxiety are forgetting a grammar point or a word, overstudying or study avoidance, missing class, or students believing that nothing should be said in the language until it can be said perfectly.

Attitude Surveys

In 1972, Gardner and Lambert created a 41-item attitude survey to measure values, attitudes, and motivation of students toward their study of French. The variables included socioeconomic status of the family, grades, test and skill scores, social values and motives, as well as interest in learning French. Gardner and Smythe (1981), concerned about the criticism of such test instruments, outlined techniques which emphasize reliability and validity in attitude/motivation tests. Horwitz et al. (1986) developed a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale based on the verbalized concerns of 78 college-level students who participated in a support group for foreign language learners. Young (1990), perceiving that speaking provokes the greatest anxiety in the L2 class, designed a three-part

questionnaire for high school and university students, to determine which classroom activities aroused most anxiety in the Spanish classroom. Also, Young included a section for written comments on teacher behaviors which students deemed helpful in reducing their L2 anxiety.

However, there is skepticism whether attitudes can be empirically measured. Oller (1979), for one, holds this view, "The trouble with attitudes is that they are so out of reach, and at the same time they are apparently subject to a kind of fluidity that allows them to change (or perhaps be created on the spot) in response to different social situations" (p. 112). He concludes that it is better for teachers to trust their intuitions and to be the encouraging force of their students.

Student Perceptions

Students are the motivating force of education, yet they are given little opportunity to appraise their educational environment. Clark (1979) describes students and their teachers "as purposive agents whose thoughts, plans, perceptions, and intentions influence their behavior and moderate the effects of behavior" (p. 31). Yet, Schubert (1986) points out that students are seldom involved in the development of curriculum, especially in foreign language. A telling example of what our system does to student self-opinion is demonstrated in the work of Murphy (1992). She suggests that students believe they are

supposed to respond to questions in a prescribed manner and are reluctant to share their opinions about texts and class materials.

Although Kleinsasser (1989) has begun documenting teacher perceptions, he strongly asserts that students also need to be considered a part of studying foreign language learning environments. "Student perceptions, at all levels --elementary through college, including adult learners--need to be documented and reviewed as well. The learning environment descriptions will continue to remain inadequate until students are talked to and studied" (p. 172).

In The New Meaning of Educational Change, Fullan (1991) proposes that students on all grade levels need to be treated like "people," with a say in their education. He asks, "What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered in the introduction and implementation of reform in schools?" (p. 170) He suggests that if we do not seek student input, then we are not treating them like human beings, and this will contribute to most educational innovations being doomed to failure.

Research Questions

Savingnon (1983) completed a study in 1972 which showed that the "initial success" (p. 112) in classroom second language learning brought about positive feelings toward the study of the foreign language. Savingnon cites Gardner,

Smythe, Clement, and Gliksman (1976) and Krashen (1981) who found that student attitudes were more important in their learning of a second language than "considerations of intelligence, aptitude, method, and time spent on learning" (p. 110). Savingnon writes that the ultimate success in a student's learning a second language relies on the student's attitude and interests. Yet, as has been shown, seldom does one bother to ask students what their interests are. Foreign language anxiety has been anecdotally observed by teachers, and researchers have developed anxiety scales to be tabulated and correlated, but what do students actually say about their foreign language learning experiences? What are their perceptions of the manner in which the second language is being taught to them? Can students offer suggestions for how teachers can help them learn Spanish? What is the most difficult aspect of learning Spanish? What is the least difficult? What are their interests and goals with Spanish? How do they expect to use Spanish in the future? When or where do they use their Spanish now? These questions guide this project's purpose.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

In order to study the perceptions of students regarding their attitudes toward taking a second language, oral interviews using an open-ended protocol format were used. This chapter will review the subjects, the design, the instrumentation, and the analysis.

Subjects

The research was a qualitative study involving the oral interview of 15, L2 Spanish students in an urban high school, with a total enrollment of 475 in Spanish classes. The researcher's mentor master teacher suggested that all levels be included in the survey. Pupils with Spanish-speaking backgrounds, for instance their parents are native speakers, were excluded from the survey. The principal of the school requested that volunteers be taken only from classes where their absence would not affect their grade. Therefore, the researcher developed a list of students who were enrolled in PE, typing, driver's ed, who had a study hall or were teacher aides. From this list, names were counted off so that every third or fourth student was chosen. Then it was verified that these randomly selected would represent every Spanish teacher in the school and that there was a fairly even male-female representation. In Level 3-4 there was only 1 male volunteer; he was

preselected to assure male representation. In the final assembly of volunteers there were in Level 1, 3 males and 2 females; in Level 2, 2 males and 3 females; and in Level 3-4, 1 male and 4 females. Thus the 15 students surveyed were composed of 6 males and 9 females. Students were assured that pseudonyms would be used in the final report.

Design and Instrument

The research design was qualitative in nature. Students were asked to respond orally to 16 open-ended questions regarding their perceptions, interests, and attitudes about taking a foreign language (see Appendix A for protocol). These interviews were taped and notated. A pilot program was administered in advance of the survey to give the researcher interviewing experience, to refine the researcher's observation abilities, to test the length of the interview, and to improve upon the questions (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). During the pilot, the open-ended questions were evaluated for ample responses. Student interviewees were asked to evaluate the questions and to suggest others. Student input was desired to assure that survey questions were addressing the areas of interest and opinion valued by students. No data from the pilot were used in the study.

Analysis

Analysis of the information received in the survey was qualitatively-based. The words and attitudes expressed in the oral interviews with Spanish L2 students were the focus

of this study's analytical base. The researcher consciously avoided leading questions, and asked students to explain for themselves any unclear statements.

Interviews were analyzed for trends which were divided into categories for the purpose of comparing and contrasting. Cultural themes expressed by first-year students were compared respectively with themes expressed by second-year and third-year students.

Quantitative surveys based on questions developed through the perceptions of researchers have been obtained. Qualitative research, based on the words and attitudes of high school students, rarely has been examined. Glesne & Peskin (1992) clearly describe the value of this research:

> Unlike quantitative inquiry, with its prespecified intent, qualitative inquiry is evolutionary, with a problem statement, a design, interview questions, and interpretations developing and changing along the way. The qualitative approach reminds 'the scientific sociologist [and the rest of us] that for all his or her neat abstractions, concrete human beings may not neatly bend before them (Plummer 1983, 7). The open, emergent nature means a lack of standardization; we do not know of and thus do not provide clear criteria packaged into neat research steps. The openness sets the stage for discovery....(p. 6)

It was this possibility for discovery that made this research valuable. From the primary recipients of education, the students themselves, we hoped to discover different views and ways to improve the learning environment of the L2 classroom. Moreover, we hoped to discover what increases positive feelings toward L2 learning. We might

discover what their interests were regarding the language they were studying. We might better understand how students perceive their L2 acquisition anxiety. We might learn that Oller (1979) is right in his contention that anxiety cannot be instrumentally measured, or we might learn that researchers like Gardner and Lambert (1972) can matter-of-factly sigh, "I told you so, attitudinal surveys are suited perfectly for research."

The study's limitations involved the limited time element and the narrowness of the sampling. A more ideal survey first would have allocated enough time to build initial rapport with students and also would have incorporated two follow-up interviews with students (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Other weaknesses were that the study was conducted on a limited population of Spanish L2 students, and the survey did not include a cross section of other areas of L2 students.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Overview

These student participants were interviewed in a southeastern, urban high school during spring semester, 1993. All 15 (6 males and 9 females) were enrolled in Spanish classes, levels 1 through 4. There were 3 males and 2 females representing Level 1; 2 males and 3 females in Level 2; and 1 male and 4 females in Level 3-4. (In this school, Levels 3 and 4 were combined in the same classroom with books alternated each year.) Students were given pseudonyms to protect their identity and encourage free expression. The end of each quotation is coded in parentheses with the level of the student, i.e., Level 1 (L1); Level 2 (L2); Level 3-4 (L3-4).

In a pre-interview warm-up, students were asked to complete a written survey (see Appendix B). These replies enhanced the picture of the participants. More than one-half of the students had visited a country outside of the United States. For instance, Greer and Alicia traveled to England. Roberto, Margarita, and José visited Mexico. Carmen and Enriqueta traveled to Canada. Felipe did not volunteer the name of the country he visited. To discern student experiences further, it was noted that nearly one-half of the high schoolers said they lived in other states. Two-thirds had some Spanish in junior high. Sonia was

exposed to Spanish in grade school, and María had it in both grade and junior high school.

Glimpses of Participants

By beginning with a broad picture of these students, one sees an impressive collage of young people motivated by their curiosity, by their sense of the beauty of Spanish, and by their thoughful consideration about the purpose of learning a second language. For example, Greer (L1) confessed that he really does not like taking Spanish, but said he understood why he had to take it. "I mean it's not fun, but I understand how it can be useful and why I have to take it." Pedro (L1) believed that if foreign languages are required by schools then students should start in the first or second grade because he thinks it is difficult for older students to adjust to a second language. "That way we're not so far behind in the world 'cause people say Americans, you know, are like lazy and only want to learn... English." Lucía (L2), however, modestly admitted that Spanish comes easily to her; yet she was keenly aware that others do have problems:

> To me, there's not much of a boundary between difficult and what's easy. I mean it's all kind of the same. Well, I mean, for me it's not, it's not easy, but it's pretty, I mean, for me Spanish, that's one thing that I'm lucky. Spanish comes pretty well...not really difficult for me. I see a lot of my other friends really struggle with it, but to me it comes... everything kind of comes together. (L2)

The students hold favorable opinions about foreign language. Alicia (L3-4) is particularly attracted to

reading aloud Spanish poetry because it not only sounds so pretty to her, it gives her a sense of accomplishment that she actually can say something in another language and know what it means. Sonia (L1) delights in pronouncing Spanish words and even holds an unconventional fascination for looking up the meaning of new vocabulary! "[I like] looking up definitions and stuff... it's fun...like chemistry, it's qui'mica" [chemistry]. Enriqueta (L3-4) enjoys Spanish, in spite of the occasions she has problems. She thinks it is a beautiful language and plans to use it in her career. Bud (L2) is an educator's dream with his refreshing attitude, "I just like to learn new stuff." José (L3-4) has a background which includes a strong emphasis on Hispanic culture; he attributes a teacher's influence to his upcoming visit to Spain.

Experiences, opinions, insights--all these were shared with the researcher. The data, therefore, come from personal perceptions of these participants. Hence, that information tells this unfolding story.

The Themes and Patterns

From the answers of an interview format [see Appendix A] five themes emerged. Students described their study of Spanish as sometimes boring and frustrating, yet important; repeatedly they referred to Hispanic culture and to "class projects." "Projects" here, meant reports and creative or artistic assignments, and students often used the terms

"projects" and "activities" interchangeably. Over time student responses showed a differentiation between what they perceived as Spanish, its relevance, culture and use of the language; and the study of Spanish, discrete points. Three primary patterns developed from the data base--difficulties with learning Spanish, the relevance of Spanish, and improving Spanish instruction.

Difficulties with Learning Spanish

Boring. For the most part, the sentiment among these learners about foreign language was positive. However, one complaint was registered with regular consistency: the instruction of Spanish. Individual responses against reviewing homework in the classroom, with terms like dull, boring, repetitive, busy work, became a clear and booming chorus against the activity. When asked what classroom activity they dislike, students said that spending class time reviewing homework was redoing what they already had done. Carmen (L2) said that all the repetition just makes her want not to listen anymore. Both Pedro and Alicia (L3-4) admitted that reviewing homework made it difficult to stay awake. Alicia confessed, "I fall asleep usually...I know it's important, but it's kind of boring." Greer described his Spanish class from this perspective:

> It just gets boring and old after a while. It was pretty fun actually in the beginning, when I started taking it 'cause it was just a new language but, after a little while it just...doing the same thing every day, doing our homework, checking it over; learn a new

lesson, doing our homework, checking it over...Same routine every day. (L1)

Enriqueta gave this opinion:

I dislike it when we do homework and then we go to class and just hum.. read it out in our Spanish class. That just, it seems hum.. like, if people have questions on the work I can understand, but a lot of the time it just seems kind of ludicrous just to go to class and read out the answers. Yes, I understand the, you know, it helps some people, but a lot of people it just bores them and, you know, they, they get tired of Spanish. I just feel that if we had more time to do things other than that then we could get a lot more done. We could learn a lot more, cause just repeating what you did for homework, just, it doesn't, it seems like it doesn't work very well. (L3-4)

Students also voiced strong objection to pattern drills. Lucía says:

I least like studying the grammatical aspect, even though I know that's essential in order to be able use it, but I mean I enjoy being able just to speak it orally, but when we have to write, write like a lot of activities in the book, it's kind of really repetitive. You write the same thing over and over and over again. I know that you do that as kind of a drill so you learn how to do it, but it's in the book and the sentences are just about the same and you answer, so it's really repetitive. And so sometimes that gets kind of boring like doing homework, you write the same thing over and over. But I mean, I know that, that repetitiveness is really what kind of, helps you remember it. [I really can't think of a better way to do it.] That's the thing, I guess, because if you didn't write it over and over then you really wouldn't be drilling. (L2)

Pedro described his dislike for doing the exercises and work sheets in class:

...They use the exercises for homework, then the next day you usually go over them in class and that usually puts me to sleep sometimes cause I mean, sometimes, I mean, you can just study the book sometimes and see what they are saying or sometimes you can't. Sometimes you have to pick up on what the teacher says. That's the most important part, but like when each sentence is

> like the same over and over again, I mean, except changing a few words here in the nouns and the verbs. That's about it. (L1)

Frustration. Besides expressing weariness with busy work and repetitious lessons, students talked about being confused and not understanding the meaning of what they were saying, reading, or hearing in Spanish. With frustration, they conveyed how difficult it was to stay motivated; how tedious it was to learn Spanish; and how disappointing, it takes so much time to become fluent. With hand-wringing discouragement one student sighed:

> "It's hard. It's hard for me. I know you should like learn it. Like you oughta just memorize it, memorize it, and finally you'll get it and then when you get, it'll pay off. But the hard part is getting to learn it...It gets discouraging after awhile when you try to learn things that she teaches you new things, and you get confused between the two things, and it's just confusing me. I just get lost sometimes...and we'll have the test, and I won't, you know, I won't do so good, but then we'll go on... I mean I guess it'll pay off, like later, when I get older or whatever. But like now when I'm learning it, it's just like I don't, I'm not very good at it. I mean, I guess I just don't understand it too well... I just get mad. (L2)

For whatever reason, the student did not want to ask the teacher for additional explanation of the grammar after school. José also described a similar problem of needing more explanation of the grammar:

> Sometimes I don't really understand the [exercises in the book] and it seems like it's more memorizing than understanding stuff and that makes it hard because I always look at the example at the top of the page and when I'm answering it, I'm just, like, following up but I don't even know what I'm saying, so that's...I don't like when we go over the grammar lessons, I don't feel like it's explained enough a lot of the time, so I just feel like I have to figure out a lot on my own, like,

> the night before the test and still it's, like, memorizing kind of what's on the page. I don't really understand it.
>
> And translation. I mean, we do sentences and sometimes it would be easier to understand if we could translate it...each line from Spanish to English... (L3-4)

Some students voiced their concern about the oral taped exercises, especially the test tapes. Knowing that their grade hinged on understanding speakers who spoke too quickly made these students very apprehensive. Margarita lamented:

> ...they might only say it once, and you just have to hear every word and sometimes they talk so fast that you have no idea what they said and you just have to guess at a letter. Especially on tests when it counts more and they're hard, I mean it's so frustrating because you can't understand what they are saying, but most of the time you can hear, like you can guess one or two words cause it's so different when you're like talking to each other because you talk slower than that, when the teacher talks to us, she talks slower than that. Because in Spanish when they talk to each other, you know, it's just like us talking fast to each other so they can understand that, just so hard when you could get points taken off if you, you know, you can't understand what they're saying and you just mark. (L2)

Bud underscores Margarita's comments:

> And then, like, on some of the tapes on the test, they talk real fast. So our teachers have to play them over again. I wish they'd slow down [the tapes]. Cause when you're on a test you kind of have to hurry so you don't understand it. And I think you need to understand it before you can write the right answer in. (L2)

Pedro's stinging indictment about the foreign language requirement was fraught with frustration as well:

> Well, I feel that if they're going to require foreign language, then it should be taught like in the first or second grade. Once someone learns the regular alphabet of English then they could come like in second grade learn how to speak Spanish too, like they do in other

> countries. You could do it like maybe three times a week replacing it with, like spelling. Spelling should be learned from the mind instead of the book, you just learn it yourself. Spanish could be taught three days a week and then spelling could be taught for two days...I think if they are going to teach it, teach it in the second grade or first grade cause when you get in ninth in high school you've already learned one language, it's hard to get out of your mind, you know, translation from English to Spanish. When you're just broadening up to English you can learn Spanish too 'cause, you know, your mind's open to different things. (L1)

Felipe was unhappy with the time-consuming process to become accomplished in Spanish:

> It's taking so long for me to become even somewhat decent [in Spanish]. I [just] wish I could become more fluent with it quicker. When I know it's not possible but...this is my third year taking Spanish, okay? And I still don't speak really fluently. I wish I could read better, write better. Especially, if I were just thrown completely into a Spanish country and just immersed into the language, I don't know if I could... I'd have a little bit of an advantage over somebody who's never had it before, but not a great big advantage. I wish I were at a point where I could converse freely with a Spanish person. (L3-4)

Disappointment, sometimes discouragement, certainly frustration colored these thoughtful and honest replies. Furthermore, José's comment about Spanish being more memorizing than understanding ties into students' replies for what they deemed the most difficult part of Spanish.

"Learning all this...is tough". There were two recurring opinions about the most difficult aspect of learning Spanish--either, verb conjugation or memorization. In Margarita's interview, she succinctly brought together both complaints:

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> Their...verb forms, how many verb forms they have, the way they change. I know we have a lot of rules in English, but of course that's again natural because you've been taught ever since you were little,...but only being in there two years and learning all this within a two-year period is tough because you have to know when to change the verb and...what tense, the endings. You have to memorize all the endings, and all [the] helping verbs, and it's very hard. (L2)

A seasoned third-fourth year student described the problem with memorization:

> ...it's like you memorize things but since it's not in English it's hard to remember them for a long, for long periods of time. You know, like, when we have vocabulary lessons, it's easy to study them for a couple of days and learn them, but you know, you don't know whether in a week or in a couple of weeks you're gonna remember them. That's what's hard, is it shows up in the book later and, you don't remember it and so, hum...that's pretty hard. (L3-4)

Greer (L1) and Pedro (L1) mentioned pronunciation as their greatest challenge. The other three Level-1 students, Roberto, Sonia, and María said verbs. María also added syntax as a problem. Carmen (L2) talked about difficulty with all the grammar. She strongly advocated smaller classes, so teachers can give more individual assistance.

Least difficult. On the other hand, when students were asked what they considered the least difficult aspect of Spanish, nearly half of those interviewed cited vocabulary; Pedro referred to cognates. Others gave a different reply--Juanita (L2) said translating; Bud (L2) said the numbers were easiest. Among Level 3-4 people, there was more disparity in the responses. José answered comprehension; Enriqueta said grammar was not difficult.

Felipe agreed with Bud; numbers were no problem for him. He attributed listening to "Sesame Street" as a preschooler as the reason numbers were simple. According to him, even his mother remembers them! Also in marked contradiction to others interviewed, Pedro, who plans to be a doctor, believed verbs were easy to remember, saying that most were regular.

The Spanish Language and Its Relevance

Importance. In spite of students' complaints about repetitive work and the various frustrations regarding the instruction and learning of Spanish, most students indicated they liked foreign language. Some students voiced embarrassment that so many Americans did not know a second language when educated people in other countries often speak as many as three languages! María:

> I don't think it's right that every time we communicate with other countries they have to speak English. I think that we should have to speak their language also...I think we all--everybody deserves to have somebody else understand them, and so I think we all should be able to speak not only our own language but another also. (L1)

Pedro (L1) commented on America's worldwide negative reputation for knowing only their native English. One of Pedro's neighbors visited an auto factory in Texas, where the managers communicated with their Spanish-speaking workers by drawing pictures on chalkboards, which the managers wore around their necks. Pedro reiterated, "...if they are going to do it [require a foreign language] they

should have done it like in first and second grade when your minds are opening up."

Half of those interviewed replied as expected; they enrolled in Spanish because a foreign language was required to enter college. However, the same number of students said they think another language broadens their communication ability or their world view. Juanita gave this opinion:

> [Taking a foreign language was required but now] I think it is something that people should know. It would be helpful if everyone knew a foreign language. Then when people come into the United States who don't speak English, I'm sure, there would be someone who could communicate with them. [I didn't feel that way when I started taking Spanish, but now I do feel] strongly [that way]. (L2)

From Carmen:

> It's like getting to know more of the world. You know, it's like, you know if you just know English, you're secluded to one area. But with Spanish, you can go broader. (L2)

From Lucía:

> The more I got into it the more I realized how really great it is to be able to speak another language, not to be limited. So many other people...think of all the people who speak Spanish, who can speak English too, just one language limits your communication ability. (L2)

The relevance of culture. This belief in broadening their world view and in being aware of differing customs, reappeared when students revealed their keen curiosity about other cultures. Students wanted their Spanish class to place a greater emphasis on the people who speak the Spanish

language. After having studied Spanish for three years, Felipe had this observation:

> [I would like to see more] culture. I feel like we learn a little bit, but I don't...know that we learn enough. Maybe it isn't as different as it would seem to me, but I [think] there are a lot of differences and it'd be nice to learn about just the little differences within daily life. (L3-4)

Another Level 3-4 student, Alicia, said:

> [I wanted to take a foreign language] because I like, I LOVE foreign languages. Because I love to travel. I love anything that has to deal with foreign cultures, I'm interested I think it's the culture that makes it interesting, learning about the culture of Spanish-speaking nations. (L3-4)

From Roberto, Level 1, came this opinion:

> I think learning about the culture [should be emphasized more]. I mean we talk about it, but I want to learn more about the culture and not just the language. I want to know about the people also, about their lives, how they live. I think that if you learn about the people, about their life, you can learn the language a lot easier...[I think there should be] more projects on the culture. Not necessarily something that will take a month, but something that could take five days. I mean it doesn't have to be hard just reading about it and learning about it. (L1)

Students cited examples of projects which they described as enhancing the cultural aspects of Spanish class and which they thought were interesting--writing reports on famous Hispanic people, looking for articles in magazines or newspapers about different Hispanic countries, and going on field trips. José enjoyed taking Spanish from a teacher who gave extra credit to students who brought and explained to the class, newspaper articles about a Spanish-speaking country. The same teacher required students to write reports

on different countries. From this written report, students also gave an oral presentation while classmates took notes. Later students played Jeopardy with questions derived from the reports.

Why Spanish?. The vast majority of those sampled commented that Spanish was chosen because it's likely they can use it. Many students see themselves using Spanish in their careers. María feels certain she'll be able to use it in marketing. Carmen is keenly interested in following her cousin's model, distributing health services in Latin America. Felipe and Roberto want to be medical doctors and Bud, a sports doctor--all see the possibility of treating patients who speak only Spanish. Margarita wants to return to Mexico so she can use her improved Spanish. José will be visiting Spain during summer vacation and wants to see if he can eventually work in Spain. Enriqueta plans to do environmental work and expects NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) to increase a need for Spanish speakers to work on environmental standards between Mexico and the United States. Julia plans to major in business and considers her Spanish an asset.

Using their Spanish. During the interviews, students described their use of Spanish outside the classroom. Unexpectedly several students disclosed Spanish-speaking interchanges with their parents. From the descriptions of

Sonia, Margarita, Bud, José, and Enriqueta, it was apparent these students and their parents enjoyed these occasions with one another. Some of these parents just wanted to hear what their children were learning, but others apparently liked to see how much they could remember from their own high school Spanish. In the meantime these children seemed to enjoy showing off to their parents, "just messing around in the morning even if it's only 'Buenos días,'" [Good morning] Bud told the researcher. Enriqueta described the fun she had with her father.

> ...a lot of the time my dad speaks, tries to freshen up on his Spanish with me, he tries to say it with me, and it's frustrating for him because it seems like the Spanish nowadays is more difficult than what he took when he was in high school and college... It's fun for us because...sometimes in Spanish he gets confused; it's a fun thing. My mom likes to hear me speak Spanish. (L3-4)

Two students said they speak Spanish to relatives who use the language in their work. María has a missionary aunt who works in Venezuela and Carmen has a cousin who delivers medical care somewhere in Latin America.

Four students recited singular, memorable occasions when they had the opportunity to use their Spanish. Juanita worked in a restaurant when some Spanish speakers came in. She helped the people with their orders and was excited about using Spanish. Carmen used it in Florida in an apartment building where her grandmother lives. Roberto (L1) described a visit to Tijuana and his enjoyment at using Spanish in the marketplace:

> [I tried to speak Spanish] to people when I was buying something, and they were really cooperative. I thought it was fun and interesting because it's another language, and it's another country and I was able to communicate with them and understand what they were saying.

While at Walt Disney World, Lucía helped a Latin American buy a stamp to mail a letter to relatives in Panama. The man tried to buy a 20-cent stamp with a 20-dollar bill:

> I hadn't had much Spanish up to then, but I was able to help him a little bit. [That made me feel] awesome, in a nice kind of way. It made me want to pursue [Spanish] even more...

Students in Level 3-4 were more likely to use Spanish outside the classroom. Three of them said they speak Spanish with friends. Enriqueta described friends visiting the house on Saturdays and, just for fun, they sometimes spoke Spanish together. This student also has a friend who is a Spanish major in college, and they speak Spanish together, with the friend sometimes helping with pronunciation.

Another Level-3-4 student uses Spanish a lot:

> [I have a friend whose native tongue is Portuguese.] Sometimes when she doesn't know the word in English, we revert to Spanish. And in the Amigos Program [which meets every other Sunday], we speak a lot of Spanish because we have a guy who attends now from Panama...he doesn't know English.
>
> [I have] Spanish pen pals that sometimes I write half in Spanish and half in English.

Perhaps these positive experiences outside the classroom contributed to what can be perceived as a remarkably nonchalant attitude of these students toward oral Spanish. They were willing to use it.

Anxiety when speaking Spanish. Strong feedback was expected from students when asked, "When someone speaks to you in Spanish, what do you do?" Instead, in general, there was a curious casualness in their replies. Only three students, one Level 2 and two Level 3-4, expressed decisive anxieties about being spoken to and trying to reply in Spanish. José, Level 3-4, gave the broadest description of his feelings. He believed he "underestimates" himself; he acknowledged his own thinking:

> I won't understand it before I even, I want to, like, when we're doing, like, listening, I get, like, all nervous and I, like, instead of just listening for key words, if I was relaxed I'd probably understand it more. Cause I, like, just assume I won't know it, I don't know or it's like a phobia I guess, I don't know, I mean, that people have I think with listening everyone thinks before they even hear the tape, "Oh this is going to be so hard, I'll just guess," or something like that.

Two more students talked about nervousness or frustration, but their replies were tempered with positive statements. Juanita (L2) said she is more confident when her teacher talks to her because her teacher knows her abilities. And Felipe (L3-4) said he tries very hard to think in Spanish rather than translating the Spanish he hears; it is only when he does not understand that he becomes frustrated.

The remaining 10 students were frankly blase in their answers. Henrietta (L3-4) said, "I listen the best I can and hear the words that I know." Lucía (L2) said that she listens attentively and tries to reply. María (L1), Margarita (L2), and Roberto (L1) answered they respond the best way they can. Pedro (L1) said his teacher is the only one who speaks Spanish to him, and he feels he is "slowly catching on." Sonia (L1) responded that she is bored by her teacher's speaking too much Spanish to the class. Julia (L3-4) commented, "it's interesting" when a native speaker talked to her, and she concluded she had no specific feelings about her teacher's talking to her in Spanish. Greer said:

> I don't really translate it in my head anymore, back to English; I just kind of understand it and I speak Spanish back to them. [How does that make you feel?] I guess okay. (L-1)

Carmen described with great enthusiasm an experience she had in Florida talking with native speakers and concludes:

> It makes me feel that, that there's a reason I'm taking Spanish because then I'm actually out there seeing how, how important Spanish is because a lot of people speak it, you know? (L2)

How much more positive an attitude can students have: I do the best I can; it's coming little by little; I try to think in Spanish, not translate. Similarly, a clear and purposeful declaration was evident when students were quizzed about the teaching of foreign language.

Improving Language Instruction

The most persistent theme running through student responses, was their interest in culture. When asked what teachers can do to make the study of Spanish more interesting, the researcher heard, "Culture." When these students were asked what would they like to see emphasized more in Spanish class, the answer was, "Culture." When they were asked what they liked most about studying Spanish, the answer was, "Learning about another culture."

Among Level-1 students their interest in culture was all the more significant because their new textbook, introduced to the school system this year, is supposed to support this interest. At the beginning of each chapter there is a cultural point, which the students indicated they liked very much. However, it appears that this cultural information seemed only to whet their appetites for they wanted more. Students commented specifically how they liked reading about dating customs, the school schedules, how meals and meal time were different. Greer lamented, "There's only one page of culture in every chapter." A couple of students said they wanted to know more about pastimes. One said he wanted to know more about bullfighting. María (L1) suggested there should be more Hispanic history. Some students wanted more experience with various foods. Bud (L2) said, "I've eaten Mexican food, but I'd like to see some real Spanish food." An interest in

clothes was mentioned by Bud (L1) and Sonia (L1). Both thought a display of clothes and/or costumes would be worthwhile.

Projects. During the interviews students often mentioned the term "projects," or interchangeably "activities." This theme usually emerged when students were asked what activity within their Spanish class they enjoyed most or would like to have emphasized more. "Projects" often were described as creative activities such as writing stories or poems, acting out skits and plays, singing, creating posters, bumper stickers, name tags, or making piñatas. A local university has an annual language fair, which offers competition in many of these categories and several of the interviewees were enthusiastically preparing for the event.

Other suggestions. Several students said they wished for more emphasis on spoken Spanish. José (L3-4) thought students should be given more opportunity to practice conversations. Carmen (L2) praised the use of dialogue cards, where paired students take turns asking and answering the questions. She said she also benefited from saying a poem into a tape recorder and she thought it would be helpful to playback such tapes (students would remain anonymous) for the class to critique pronunciation.

> [I like the idea of recording Spanish] because you have to pronounce it correctly, and that's what Spanish is, it's not just writing, I mean writing Spanish is like I said, important, but the big thing is that you have to

> be able to speak Spanish, and that's just it, you speak it, and it seems that all we're doing is writing it...I think it [Spanish] should be like more, like oral... (L2)

Lucía said that speaking Spanish helps her more than writing it.

> Now I see, more interactive learning, things like that, oral, being able to use it more. I mean I know that you have to go through necessary rules of writing and everything but I almost kind of wish it was about 50/50 where you did more activities where you are forced to speak it a little more, because I think for me when I use it, I usually remember it better than just when like when I sit here and write it, like if I use a certain word, like I remember the other day I was talking about peaches or something like that...If I hadn't had that conversation...I didn't forget that word and I probably won't, I'll probably remember it now. (L2)

Both Alicia and Henrietta from Level 3-4 talked about the importance of doing activities which students can relate to. Alicia suggested having debates in lieu of talking about the situations given in the textbook.

> We should have, I think it would be neat if we had debates, cause that's what, cause people if you're just told to speak about something you have no feeling about, like, the situations [in the book], you're not going to be able to speak really well, but if you're told about a topic and you have to go home and figure out, like, your position, like, for debate and you have to work out, get your vocabulary straight and everything, and if you feel, if there's some emotion behind it, you'll want to speak and I think it'll be easier, more interesting and it'll be livelier. I mean, people, you know, debates are just, I think, the best way. I don't know where I came up with that, but that's how I would practice speaking. (L3-4)

Henrietta (L3-4) clearly described the means by which she would prefer to practice her Spanish. Instead of repeating all the homework, she thought teachers should go

over just the questions people may have, then classroom assignments should emphasize students' creativity. She liked assignments which required students to write from the perspective of another person. She gave several examples: Pretend to be a bellhop in a downtown hotel and describe the people who come into the hotel; imagine oneself as a sailor and make up events which may happen to him; pretend to be a journalist and write a news story, which perhaps could be printed in a student-made newspaper; write an article about a current event. Henrietta's own words:

> You know, say I went to my class today and my teacher said "Well, I want you to write about what's going on in Waco, Texas," I would be a lot more, I would probably learn a lot more words. I would learn what madman meant and things like that, I mean, you know, it be a lot more fun and you would actually learn things. And then she'd say, "Well, use ten of your vocabulary words," and I would learn the words a lot better because I would have to know the meaning and know how it'd fit into the sentence. (L3-4)

Henrietta enjoyed an assignment to write original poems using vocabulary words, and she thought every vocabulary lesson should be transformed into a song to facilitate learning. She suggested that whenever posters are used in school to announce events, Spanish classes should make similar posters so there are bilingual announcements. And if schools have signs, such as "no smoking," post them in Spanish as well.

Review

Students were unwavering in their description of a foreign language study that is relevant. They were animated

when they talked about wanting more culture, their curiosity seeming to be insatiable. They also were embarrassed by the single-language mindset many Americans convey. They viewed their Spanish as an opportunity to broaden their personal relationship with the world family. Also, they saw themselves using Spanish as adults, be it in their careers, in their travels, or just in their daily life, conversing with the growing Hispanic population in this country.

Participants acknowledged honestly the need to practice grammar elements. They simply drew the line with the droning repetition of reviewing homework in class. Unless someone had a specific question, they saw little value in it. They gave their honest appraisal: because they were so bored, they stopped listening.

Rather than an emphasis on discrete points, students asked for more opportunities to use Spanish. The researcher heard their preference for speaking Spanish, and one student even suggested a closer division between the two skills of speaking and writing. Becoming confused over verb conjugations which caused poor test scores was frustrating; yet there was enthusiasm for paired dialogues with classmates. Sometimes they felt lost when they could not understand what they had just read, what they heard--even what they were saying, just following the model; yet, they liked to use the language in skits, in poems, or in singing. Students talked about the frustration they experienced when

confronted with the oral taped exercises. When they didn't know what was being said, they just guessed. One Level 3-4 student felt so apprehensive about the taped listening exercises and testing, he admitted to low self-expectation, even calling it a "phobia." Yet, most in this sampling did not seem intimidated when Spanish was spoken to them by individuals. Rather, they indicated confidence in their progress, saw themselves improving, expecting to do better next time. And when these students actually had an opportunity to use their Spanish in real-life situations, they were exhilarated and felt they were experiencing a concrete purpose for a second language.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

The study focused on the Spanish foreign language learning experience of 15 high school students attending a southeastern urban high school during the spring of 1993. The students' interviews indicated they perceived a difference between foreign language instruction and how they felt about the Spanish language, per se. For the most part students were very positive about the language. They chose Spanish because to them it seemed the most useful in terms of talking to Hispanics living in the United States. Some saw Spanish as helping them in their future careers as well as in their travels. Several students enjoyed bantering in Spanish with their parents; others were thrilled to communicate and to help non-English speakers visiting this country. Several mentioned their belief that a foreign language helps broaden a person's world view.

This research began with a survey of literature concerning attitudes and anxieties students have toward foreign language study. By way of the format used here, it was anticipated students would share more openly regarding stress factors as set forth by Lucas (1984) and Horwitz et al. (1986). That is to say, students might verbalize their fears of embarrassment, forgetting grammar points or words at the moment of being called upon, or perhaps feeling they should not speak until they could do so perfectly. Students

had ample opportunity to express themselves on these areas (see Appendix A for questions 5, 8, 10, 14, 15, and 16). Yet, they did not make a major issue over their insecurities regarding comprehension or speaking. Only a handful of students referred to any anxiety whatsoever, when they responded to the specific question: What do you do when someone speaks Spanish to you? Yet, these five were among students with the most positive attitudes about the Spanish language.

The data show students are more anxious about the method of language instruction and less concerned about the language per se. When this factor is compared to the literature review, the reasons for student negative attitudes toward foreign language change significantly. The issues of student motivation and of making students more comfortable about speaking and listening, are no longer primary problems. Instead, it seems pedagogy faces the issues of appropriate preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers to accommodate students' interest in communicative competence and curiosity about culture. In addition, a new curriculum design, which recognizes those specific interests of students, requires attention and development at local and state levels.

There was remarkable similarity of replies among the three levels of students interviewed. For the most part, it would be difficult to determine the level of a student by

the interests, opinions, and perceptions given in a specific interview. Level 1 students, however, had far less to say in the area of the frustration theme than the other two levels; also, there was more disparity in their replies to the most difficult aspect of Spanish. It is believed that the first level's shorter experience with the foreign language class accounts for this wider variation.

Students spoke respectfully, and sometimes apologetically, about the difficulties they had in learning Spanish. Yet, they were quick to elaborate on the relevance of Spanish in their lives and on the belief that knowing a second language and about another culture was a valuable educational experience. With evident sincerity, students offered suggestions for improving Spanish instruction. These three domains became the foundation of this research: difficulties learning Spanish; relevance of Spanish; and improvement of Spanish instruction.

Difficulties

The vast majority of students said the most difficult aspects of learning Spanish were verb conjugation and memorization. These two were cited almost equally as often. Other replies from Level 1 were pronunciation and syntax; and from Level 3-4, "picky rules." Ironically, vocabulary, which involves memorization, was the response given most often as the least difficult aspect of learning Spanish. One student, however, perceptively analyzed the phenomenon:

Words are easy to remember on the short-term, but without regular practice, they can be lost in the long term. Two students, one in Level 1 and another in Level 2 said they considered everything in Spanish to be fairly easy for them. Otherwise, other replies on what students considered easy were cognates, translating, comprehension, grammar, and numbers.

There was little variation in student perceptions regarding the manner Spanish was being taught to them. Primarily, students reported that the study of Spanish was so boring and so repetitious that they frequently tuned out of class. Simply, they reproached pattern drills. They described the daily instruction as a monotonous routine of doing homework followed by repeating the same work in class the next day. They felt compelled to apologize and then confessed with polite sincerity that the system made them vulnerable to drowsiness in class; therefore, they saw little point in the pattern drills. A couple of students thought answers should be given quickly, so class time could be devoted to more meaningful activities.

Various frustrations were disclosed. Frustration was especially apparent when students described occasions when they did not understand what they were reading or saying. For example, one student admitted to following the model of the pattern drill during oral exercises, while not really knowing what it meant. The oral taped exercises for tests

also received negative attention as students complained of speakers rifling off statements which were incomprehensible to them. One third-year student called the fear of the tapes a kind of "phobia," expecting not to understand what would be said. Another third-year student was disappointed because becoming proficient in Spanish was taking so long. And a first-year student was perturbed that Spanish was not taught in grade school where he believed it would be easier to learn a second language.

Relevance

Yet, the interests and goals of students with Spanish strongly indicated that knowing a second language was important to them. They believed that such knowledge expands their global view, and they frankly were embarrassed by our country's reputation for only English. Students admitted they were taking Spanish because a foreign language was required for college entrance, but they also expected the course to strengthen their communication skills. Several even admitted they were glad foreign language was a required subject.

Almost all of the students envisioned themselves using Spanish in their future. Some students expected to use it in their careers as doctors, in business, in taking health service to Latin America. Several planned to travel, especially to Spain and to Mexico. Some already had been to Mexico, and looked forward to returning with some knowledge

of the language. Still others, saw the strong possibility of using their Spanish to communicate with the rapidly growing Hispanic population in this country.

The students' desire to use the language in their present lives was apparent. Even now, their use of Spanish outside the classroom was significant. The most frequent reply, however, was quite unexpected. Several students said they used their Spanish with their parents in apparently playful exchanges. Two students spoke with relatives, and two mentioned writing to penpals. Outside of their class, many students sometimes communicated in Spanish to friends--three of these were Level 3-4 students. Four students described opportunities to use their Spanish with native speakers, and these events helped to cement for them a real purpose for studying the language.

Improvement of Instruction

Certainly these participants offered suggestions for Spanish instruction. Almost all believed that Spanish class could be made more meaningful by increasing the emphasis on culture. Above all other comments, students were emphatic about their interest in culture and customs of Hispanic people. These high school students said there was not sufficient opportunity to survey Hispanic culture, be it art, history, or daily life. Learning about daily life and customs was particularly important to them.

Every single student indicated an appreciation for oral activities or expressed value in communicating orally. Students wanted more emphasis on oral activities and less on repetitious written pattern drills. One student even suggested class should consist of 50% writing and 50% talking. Students valued practice conversations, dialogue cards, talking into tape recorders, reciting poems, performing skits, singing. One Level 3-4 student suggested debates; another wanted more one-on-one conversations between students and teacher. Probably as a result of their greater experience in language classes, third-fourth year students proffered the most diverse suggestions: Ask groups of students to present the grammar points instead of the teacher; create bilingual signs to coincide with the school's English signs or posters; make assignments more meaningful by writing from the perspective of another person, such as a hotel bellhop describing patrons; write a news story about some current event or create a student newspaper; write original poems or songs, especially as a means for learning and retaining vocabulary.

Students were animated with responses which they called "projects" or "activities." Besides acting out skits or plays, reciting poems, singing, and playing games, most enjoyed creative tasks, such as, making posters, name tags, bumper stickers, piñatas. Some mentioned writing reports on

famous Hispanic people, bringing current event articles to class, writing reports and giving oral presentations on different Spanish-speaking countries as valuable assignments.

Summary of Research Questions

Students in this study were clear on how they could improve Spanish instruction--less class time on reviewing the previous night's homework--more emphasis on culture and self-expression. Greer (L-1) summed up the general sentiment of the vast majority of students interviewed: "Don't use the same routine everyday...If they'd just keep it, if they'd just keep it, more interesting, I'm sure kids would do a whole lot better." Kleinsasser (1989, 1991) would support these perceptions. He showed "certain/ nonroutine" learning cultures are more effective settings for language acquisition. In these environments teachers gave students an opportunity to use the foreign language in immediate, personal contexts. There was less emphasis on reading book explanations of grammar and on book exercises. These nonroutine teachers believed all students can acquire a new language; they attempted to incorporate second language acquisition and education theories; and they gladly shared and received ideas among all levels of school hierarchy. The end result was students who were actively involved during class instruction and who spoke the target language with the teacher before and after school. It

appears that the students in this study have valuable suggestions for instructors to develop nonroutine/certain learning environments.

Recommendations

The data show students see instruction in the Spanish language as mostly grammar oriented. They acknowledge the need for grammar, but they want more oral practice and application of the spoken language. They want to be able to interact with Spanish speakers whom they may meet in their daily lives. They see themselves using the language in their future careers. They see themselves traveling to Spanish-speaking countries, which indeed is increasingly possible, as air travel has become common. These factors suggest that curriculum must be refocused to meet the specific needs of its students, and students are saying they need communicative competence. These results confirm Savingnon's assertion (1983) that students' needs and interests must be addressed if foreign language study is to be a meaningful force in today's education.

These data also strongly indicate that students come into the foreign language classroom with a great deal of curiosity about other cultures. Without question, their current curriculum is found wanting and does not capitalize on their apparent readiness to learn. Indeed, the data give powerful support to the Crawford-Lange and Lange (1984) integrative language/culture model. Their eight-stage

learning process combines culture with communication, students' self-proclaimed cornerstones of their motivation.

The Crawford-Lange and Lange model transforms the discrete point emphasis of language learning and the thinking limitations (primarily on the informational level) of culture teaching to an educational process. The following is a synopsis of their eight stages:

One: Identification of a cultural theme. A theme which is meaningful to the students is selected by the teacher of students.

Two: Presentation of cultural phenomena. Teacher uses visuals and possibly the target language to present the theme.

Three: Dialogue (target/native cultures). Students review the material among themselves and with the teacher either in the native tongue or in the target language depending on the level of the students. They conclude by writing a statement about their reactions or perceptions.

Four: Transition to language learning. Students determine what aspect of the theme they wish to work with and what vocabulary and linguistic skills they will need to express themselves.

Five: Language learning. Practice ensues through pattern drills, games, simulations, or role play.

Six: Verification of perceptions (target/native culture). After the language has been practiced, students are ready to learn more about the cultural theme. Their reaction statement from phrase three is reviewed. It is used as a basis for verifying their view by seeking out new sources be it interviews with native speakers, library research, correspondence. All info is brought together in class and is compared to the native culture.

Seven: Cultural awareness. All aspects of the cultural phenomena are examined. Ultimately students will compare and contrast the issues and if students' perceptions had changed, that too is verbalized.

> Eight: Evaluation of language and cultural proficiency. Students apply the new proficiencies by way of written and oral demonstrations: simulations, dialogues, activities appropriate to the theme. Evaluation of cultural competence is limited to students' research findings; and language competence, to the content in stage 5.

Lange-Crawford and Lange's method combines language learning and culture into a process. The process utilizes the communicative model and develops proficiency in the target culture, potentially including the examination of aspects of the native culture. Students develop awareness of their personal reactions to new cultures, and they are prepared to realize that change is a part of life's development (stage 7).

Knowingly, Lange-Crawford and Lange have identified the limitations on their integrative method: a lack of resources, entrenched traditional language instruction, and inadequate pre-service and in-service teacher development.

The sparsity of resources, however, Lange-Crawford and Lange do not view as a detriment. One of the purposes of their method is to encourage student inquiry and student search for information. It is not expected that students will find all the answers or a "correct" answer. They suggest, for example, that a search of the community may uncover people who have some knowledge of the target culture.

However, here it is believed the issues of teacher development and entrenched traditional language instruction

are a greater hindrance because teachers are most likely to want to teach in the same manner they were taught. However, as increasing numbers of students fall below acceptable standards and as the student ranks further fill with willing participants in mediocrity, the public and school boards will scrutinize the value of foreign language in the curriculum. Ultimately, it may be a question of the continued existence of foreign language study in the schools of our nation, which will motivate the forces of change.

Recommendations for Further Study

It is recommended that more data be collected on what students believe should be done to improve foreign language instruction. Also, additional samplings need to include other second-language learners as well. Further, high school and college-level samplings must be maintained separately in order to evaluate if there are perception differences. Also, just as the students distinguished between the language and the learning of the language, future research must divide student anxiety along the same parameters: Do one anxiety study about the study of language and another about the language itself. Finally, research is needed to learn what veteran teachers are already doing successfully in their classrooms.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you expect to use Spanish in your future?
2. When do you use Spanish now?
3. Why did you decide to take a foreign language?
4. Why did you chose Spanish for your foreign language?
5. For you what is the most difficult aspect of learning Spanish?
6. What is the least difficult?
7. What do you like most about studying Spanish?
8. What do you like least about studying Spanish?
9. What activity within your Spanish class do you enjoy most?
10. What activity within your Spanish class do you dislike?
11. What can teachers do to make the study of Spanish more interesting?
12. What aspect would you like to see emphasized more in your Spanish class?
13. What are some things which your past or present Spanish teachers have done that you really like?
14. What are your feelings about taking Spanish?
15. When someone speaks Spanish to you, what do you do?
16. Is there anything else about your foreign language study on which you want to express an opinion?

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

(not part of oral survey)

1. How long have you lived in [this city]?
2. How long have you attended [this school]?
3. How long have you studied Spanish?
4. Did you study Spanish in grade school or junior high?
5. Have you ever visited another country? Do you plan to? When?
6. What other subjects are you taking besides Spanish?